

The Augusta Coin Club Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the Month at Be My Guest

The Augusta Coin Club since 1959

Pres. Steven Nix
1st V.P. Glenn Sanders
2nd V.P. Howard Black
Sec. John T. Attaway
Treas. Mike Joesbury
Sgt. in Arms: Bryan Hoyt
and Joe Bert



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THE AUGUSTA COIN CLUB MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November, 2013

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 21 from 6:30 to 9:30 PM

Club Fall Coin & Paper Money Show well attended both days

Club Meeting Calendar for 2013

Jan. 17	May 16	Sep. 19
Feb. 21	June 20	Oct. 17
Mar. 21	July 18	Nov. 21
Apr. 18	Aug. 15	Fri., Dec. 20



Patriot's Park was a buzz with activity both days of coin show
[Magnify page to 150% or view with 3 power magnifying glass]

Compared with all ACC shows held since 2010, there was steady traffic by the public on both days. Many more members were in attendance and a large contingent of folks from the Stephen James CSRA Coin Club of Aiken, SC was also on hand. This was borne out by an attendance of almost 300 persons; a record since coming to Patriot's Park. The Welcoming Desk was well staffed with Bryan Hoyt, Jim Sproull, George Wren, Roger Worpel, Joe Ferrantelli, Glenn Sanders, Len Sienkiewicz, Pat James, Don Youngs, Ken Woodfield, Ed Deketeleare, Richard Abraham, Geri Putnam and Robert Anderson serving at various times during the two days. The club appreciates the efforts by all these persons and the other members who helped out with the set up and take down. The net profit was \$471.01. The foregoing notwithstanding, had the club not sold \$826 in raffle tickets, the show would have actually lost money as only 35 tables were taken compared with more than 50 sold at some of our previous events. It is obvious that we must either sell more tables or increase rates, or both.

(More Show & Club News on page 4, column 1)

Collecting Barber Half dollars

By Arno Safran



An uncirculated 1915-D Barber Liberty Head half dollar
[Use 3 power glass or magnify page to 150% to view details.]

Of all the US denominations authorized by Congress, the half dollar may be arguably the most attractive and yet, it has been shunned by the public in daily commerce for almost three-quarters of a century. The Liberty Head half dollar may not appear as exquisite in beauty as the Adolf Weinman's Walking Liberty type or as graceful as Gobrecht's Liberty Seated but it is nonetheless a stunning coin and far more attractive than the Franklin or Kennedy half dollar designs that followed.

The engraver of the coin was Charles Barber, who upon the death of his father, William Barber, was chosen over George Morgan--designer of the popular silver dollar that bears his name--to be Chief Mint Engraver of the US Mint. Some numismatic scholars believe that Barber "stole" Morgan's dollar design, shrewdly reversing the direction from Liberty facing left to right while modifying some of the external details. Contemporary critics compared Barber reverse of the eagle to a moth, which was not meant as a compliment. The series was struck from 1892 thru 1915, one year less than the companion Barber quarter and dime types. Unlike the lower denominational series however, there are no real "stoppers" in completing a Barber half set such as the 1896-S, 1901-S and 1913-S quarters or the 1894-S dime, (*of which less than ten specimens are currently known.*) The foregoing said, completing a circulated set of Barber halves averaging Fine-12 will not be easy because most Barber halves, excluding the AU-58 to MS-65 pieces--which only the rich could afford to keep when new--saw heavy circulation.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

The Majestic Barber Half dollar

(Continued from page 1, column 2)



An uncirculated 1892 Barber Half dollar

[Use 3 power glass or magnify page to 150% to view details.]

While there are a fairly large number of common dates among the Barber half series, the two most often encountered are the 1892-P pictured above and the 1915-D seen on the preceding page. These two dates represent the first and last year of issue, which usually attract souvenir collectors. Despite a mintage of 934,245 for the 1892-P, there are probably more survivors in mint-state than in Fine-12 to VF-35. Collectors wishing to locate a high-end AU-58 thru MS-63 1892-P Barber half and have the means to afford one, should not have too much trouble locating an attractive specimen. This cannot be said regarding the low mintage 1892-O with only 390,000 produced or the 1892-S, which despite an output of 1,029,028 is almost as scarce in the circulated grades and the more expensive grading MS-63 or higher.

During its 24 year tenure, Barber halves were coined at four different Mints. Both Philadelphia and San Francisco struck Barber halves in every year from 1892 thru 1915. The New Orleans Mint produced the coin from 1892 thru 1909 and the Denver Mint, which began operations in 1906, produced Barber halves from 1906 thru 1915 with the exception of 1909, 1910 and 1914.

For those looking for circulated specimens, most of the Philadelphia Mint issues with the exception of the 1913, 1914 and 1915 Barber halves are fairly common and are usually found better struck than their New Orleans and San Francisco counterparts. The Denver Mint issues of 1906 thru 1908, 1912, and 1913 and finally, the 1915-D are fairly common and also well struck. The 1911-D is scarcer. The Denver Mint struck no half-dollars in either 1909 or 1910.

The most difficult dates to find grading Fine-12 or better are the 1893-S, 1897-O & S, the 1898-O, 1901-S, 1904-S, (one of the toughest dates of the entire series) and the aforementioned 1913, 1914 and 1915 P Mint issues.



A 1904-S Barber half dollar grading Fine

[Use 3 power glass or magnify page to 150% to view details.]

Why are Barber halves so scarce above VG-10? Between 1875 and 1925, there was a continual wave of immigrants entering the United States from Europe and the far-east. As a result, hundreds of thousands of newly arrived immigrants were competing with Americans for factory jobs. Compared with the second half of the 20th Century and the early 21st century, there was hardly any inflation during the entire 19th Century. Wages and prices were so low that a half a dollar had tremendous spending power. Most laborers could not afford to put away a new Barber half if by happenstance they received such a coin in their small manila pay envelopes. As a result most surviving Barber halves saw heavy circulation. At coin shows one will come across many grading AG-3 (barely any detail on the coin) to VG-10, in which parts of some letters in LIBERTY will appear within her tiara but not all. According to the *Red Book*, for a Barber half to be graded FINE-12, the letters in LIBERTY should be “nearly completely legible but worn”]



**A detail of 1904-S 50c showing nearly all letters
Magnify page to 150%**



A 1901 Barber Half sold as a Fine

Today it might easily be graded VF-20

[Use 3 power glass or magnify page to 150% to view details.]



With changing times, grading often becomes reinterpreted. Back in 1992, this specimen of the 1901 Barber half-dollar (one of the most common dates of the series) was sold as a Fine. From the inset at left, not only do all of the seven letters show clearly in the tiara but there is additional detail in the forehead above the eye and nose. Based on the certified grading standards observed today, this coin might conceivably grade VF-20.

Most collectors could probably afford to add such a specimen of the 1901 Barber half to their type set. Whether graded Fine-15 or VF-20, the coin is relatively inexpensive and can appear attractive if “original” and un-cleaned. The best part of Charles Barber’s half design is that unlike the beautiful Walking Liberty Half, which loses its eye appeal below AU-53, the Barber half can appear elegant to the eye all the way down to Fine-15 and there are enough common dates to find one. In their harsh criticism of the coin, Barber’s contemporary critics got it wrong.

Focus is the key to assembling an interesting collection regardless of price or value

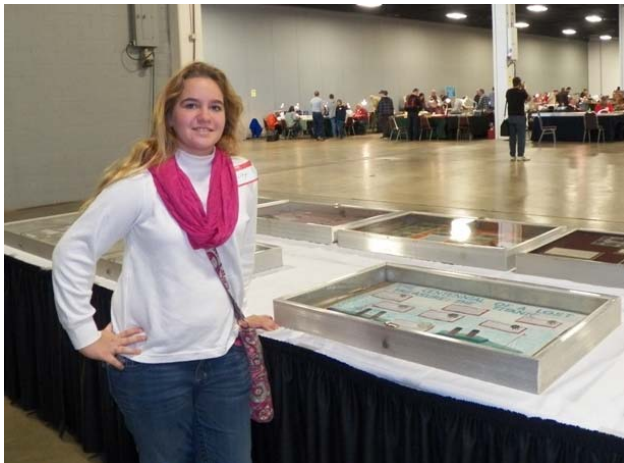


A 1912 Liberty "V" nickel graded AU-55

[Use 3X power glass or magnify page to 200% to view details]

Collecting even common date obsolete US coins in AU or mint-state can be expensive. For young people 18 years or younger, it is virtually impossible yet at the recent SCNA convention held in Greenville, SC there were a number of exhibits that attracted the eye of this attendee that were assembled by young people. One of the displays that caught my attention was an exhibit entitled the "Centennial of a Lost Treasure: The Titanic." The exhibit featured coins dated 1912, the year the Titanic sank after grazing a huge iceberg in the north Atlantic on its maiden voyage from England to the United States. None of the coins were in AU, let alone mint-state but the exhibitor's focus was assembling various coins dated 1912 that enabled her to create an interesting display and it received recognition at the show.

The exhibit was put together by Shelby Plooster, a young numismatist who resides in the CSRA and is a member of the Augusta Coin Club.



**Shelby Plooster standing in front of her Exhibit
At the SCNA Convention held at the TD Convention Center
In Greenville, SC on Oct-25-27.
[photo taken by Helen Barry]**

The difference between an accumulator and a numismatist is one of focus. The accumulator is one who enjoys acquiring various type coins that he or she may fancy at the time but does not appear to focus on the completion of a group of related coins; in other words a "set." be it short or large a large one. The numismatist on the other hand enjoys the challenge of locating that elusive piece that will fill the final hole of a series or a type set whether it be a that of US war nickels (1942-45) or a more ambitious enterprise such as acquiring one *sestertius* (a large ancient copper coin) for each of the 12 Caesars of Rome.

Due to the expense of many US coin types, especially in XF or better, the short set may prove to be the only affordable option for the aspiring numismatist. These can take the form of year sets, proof sets, and basic type sets of a single denomination, an odd denominational set or a significant date in world history.



**The obverses of an Odd Denominations Type Set
From l to right: top 1835 1/2c, 1866 2c
Bottom: 1851-O 3c silver, 1879 3c nickel & 1875cc 20c
[Magnify page to 200% to see coin details more clearly.]**

More Pictures from the Show



**At the Welcoming Desk on Friday were (from left to right)
Members Pat James, Glenn Sanders, Roger Worpell, Columbia
County Security Officer and Joe Burt**



**As one can see, there was lots of activity at the
Nov. 8, 9, 2013 Augusta Coin Club Show
Held at Patriot's Park in Columbia County**

More Show News



A number of young people attended the show



Collectors browse at Chris Lucree and Ton Burke's tables

As with past shows, five prizes were purchased by the club for the drawing held Saturday, Nov. 9 around 4:00 PM. As it turned out three of the five prizewinners were members of our club* and another from the SJ CSRA CC of Aiken, SC**.

The prizewinners of the five raffle drawings were:

- 1st Prize-1/10 oz gold eagle – Helen Barry* & **
- 2nd Prize-MS-63 Morgan \$1.00 – Jerry Lipskey**
- 3rd prize-2006 Silver Proof Set – Jim Livingston
- 4th prize-2012 silver eagle –Clyde Hooks*
- 5th prize-1963 Proof Franklin half-dollar-Andrea Price*

Congratulations go out to all the winners!

Finally, despite undergoing a knee operation in the days leading up to the Show, Bourse chairman David Chism managed to put together another successful event for our club. On behalf of the more than 125 members of the Augusta Coin Club...Thanks for all you do, David!

Club to continue to meet at "Be My Guest" thru end of 2013

Despite short notice regarding the sudden closing of America's Best Value Inn, more than 50 members still managed to attend our first meeting at Be My Guest, an attractive and commodious catering establishment located on Owens Road just off Washington Road across from the Mullins Crossing Shopping Center.



Entrance to Be My Guest, new meeting place of the ACC

At the Oct. 17 meeting President Nix reported on the reason for the sudden change in venue and explained that after a thorough search for a new club meeting site, Be My Guest appeared to be the most reasonable considering most of the area hotels are asking. **President Nix also announced that our club will be holding a barbecue dinner free to all 2013 paid members at our November 21 meeting beginning at 6:30 PM. The meal will be catered by Be My Guest.**



A portion of the members at Be My Guest during the Oct. 17 meeting

The program consisted of a brief presentation on **US Coin Price Sources** by Arno Safran. He described and displayed the three retail publications beginning with the annual, *A Guidebook of US Coins (AKA the Red Book)*, followed by the two major monthlies, *Coin World's Coin Values* and *Numismatic News' Coin Market* supplements, also one wholesale source, *the Coin Dealer Newsletter (AKA, the Gray Sheet)*. The last named comes in three installments, the Weekly featuring more general areas such as generic type, proof sets, Mercury dimes and Walking Liberty halves, Morgan and Peace dollars, 20th Century gold issues, and Commemoratives, The Monthly Supplement features mostly late 19th thru mid 20th century US coin types while the Quarterly publications feature prices in most grades for all basic coin types and denominations by date. Today, one can also get on line and check out the PCGS retail prices for all US coins within their corresponding grades.

Club News

(Continued from page 4, column 2)

The prizewinners at the Oct. 17 meeting were John Lefler who won the first door prize receiving a 2006-P Franklin Commemorative silver dollar, also Robert Anderson who won the second door prize, a 1961-D uncirculated Franklin half-dollar and Gary James who won the 50/50 winner take all drawing - \$68.00. Congratulations John, Robert and Gary!

As reported earlier, our next meeting will be the barbeque dinner on Thursday, Nov. 21 at Be Our guest. The dinner will be served at 6:30 PM and is free to all 2013 paid members.

The editor is requesting that from now on, all members who bring in a Show & Tell item please hand in a typed description of the item to the editor or E-mail to arnosafran@comcast.net two weeks prior to the next meeting for inclusion in the newsletter. There is simply not enough time during the meeting to jot everything down. That way, the presenter's item(s) will be accurately reported to the membership. Thank you!

Coin of the Month



A 1913 Barber Half-dollar

[Use 3X power glass or magnify page to 200% to view details]

Since the feature article in this issue of the newsletter is on Barber halves, the editor thought readers might like to see an example of one of the three scarcer Philadelphia mint dates, the 1913. Only 188,000 were reported minted at the Philadelphia Mint that year making it the third lowest mintage of the 73 piece set. The coin was acquired "raw" back in 1990 as an XF-40 for \$250. Today the 2014 *Red Book* lists it at \$650 while the PCGS on line price guide lists a PCGS certified XF-40 at \$850.

The above example is attractive and appears to be "original" (i.e., not cleaned or artificially toned) and would probably certify as an XF-40, possibly even XF-45 based on today's grading standards.

The coin now a century old, was struck in .900 fine silver but is worth a lot more than its bullion value. At least four, possibly five generations have handled it over that period and while this 1913 Barber half specimen may not have seen a lot of circulation, it nonetheless may hold many secrets of the persons who used it during its short time in commerce.

This acquisition is one of the reasons that make coin collecting interesting and fascinating.

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